

Professional Profile: Heidi Outtrim, LCSW

On a daily basis, our rigorously trained healthcare professionals are helping to heal those suffering from emotional trauma. From responding to victims of recent disasters to treating clients with long-term effects of childhood trauma, these nonprofit and government agency clinicians make EMDR therapy available, most significantly to those in underserved communities. To understand the impact of Trauma Recovery, EMDR Humanitarian Assistance Programs, it helps to get to know our clinicians. Here is one we would like to introduce to you: Heidi Outtrim, LCSW.

Since 2011, Heidi Outtrim, LCSW, has been combining her professional expertise with personal experiences to help clients struggling with substance abuse, mental health issues and trauma. In her work at the Cornell Scott Hill Center, the majority of her clients are dealing with the long-term effects of trauma. Although Heidi uses an array of traditional approaches, she finds that EMDR therapy techniques are especially effective in helping her clients to heal.

Heidi was introduced to EMDR therapy in graduate school. After further researching this trauma-informed therapy, as a professional healthcare worker at a nonprofit agency, completed the Trauma Recovery/HAP Basic EMDR Training. At the same time, she became an EMDR client herself and experienced the therapy applied to her own struggles. "I wanted to work out some of my own issues before helping others with theirs." By experiencing the effects of EMDR therapy from both sides of the process—as client and clinician—Heidi feels she can bring deeper empathy and greater expertise to each of her EMDR clients.

Heidi finds that EMDR allows people to step outside of traditional "talk therapy," as it challenges them to

access emotions not accessible in traditional therapy. "What makes it successful is the control that it gives clients. The process puts more accountability on them—not just brains, but body experiences too. They are doing the work. They are not just victims."

As an example, Heidi reflected on one of her mature clients who has spent her life dealing with issues evolving from a complex childhood trauma. After years of "talk-therapy," this client sought EMDR therapy. "She came to me, feeling so 'stuck' in her head that made it very difficult for her to access many different emotions surrounding the trauma." After about 5 sessions, she was able to tolerate the emotions surrounding the trauma. This allows the healing to happen as her work continues. EMDR therapy is giving her an extra-tool, and she is becoming more powerful. According to Heidi, "It's an honor to witness someone healing like this. It keeps me motivated."

Heidi is just one of our practitioners who are using their EMDR therapy training to help individuals within local nonprofit and government agencies to heal. We look forward to introducing you to other clinicians to learn about their practices, about how they are helping victims of trauma to heal and about the Trauma Recovery/HAP mission.